

Good Shabbos, everyone.

Mazel tov to Ari and Hinda Moskovitz on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Shua. Mazel tov to the Grandparents Idy Moskovitz (Baltimore) and Rabbi Dovid and Esther Kashnow (Boston). Mazel Tov and welcome to all the guests who are here to share in the simcha.

Thank you to the *drasha* sponsors:

- Eva Katznelson, in memory of her husband, Dr. Judah Katznelson, Yehuda ben HaRav Mayer Zavel, whose *yahrtzeit* is the 23rd of Sivan. May his *Neshama* have an *aliya*.
- Eli and Sirki Lax, in honor of the *yahrtzeit* of Bubby Rachel Miriam Siegal, whose *yahrtzeit* was the 17th of Sivan. May her *Neshama* have an *aliya*.

May all the sponsors be rewarded for their support of the shul with *bracha*, *hatzlacha*, and good health.

Earlier this week, I spent an exhausting but exhilarating 4 days in Eretz Yisrael on a Rabbinic mission sponsored by “Naava Kodesh,” together with other Baltimore Rabbanim. We explored the Anglo communities there, visiting many schools and communities, to be resources to our members and others in the Baltimore Jewish community who are exploring *aliya*. It was exciting to see many neighborhoods and communities, shuls and schools and to speak with Rabbanim, principals, Rebbeim, teachers, and families who have made *aliya*. We spent time in Yerushalayim and various neighborhoods in Ramat Beit Shemesh, and met delegations from Afula, Rechovot, and other Anglo communities. We also spent time with Rav Yitzchak Berkovitz, Rav Asher Weiss, and Rav Yosef Zylberman. Baruch Hashem, Eretz Yisrael continues to build and grow...and the Jewish people continue to gather there from the four corners of the world. We *daven* for peace in Israel and in the world and a *Geula Shleima*.

I am excited that we finally have a professionally produced chart with all our *shiurim*---in a clear format you can look at each day of the week and see the *shiurim* offered in our shul and on Zoom. This chart is on our website and has been included in emails for the past week. Find a shiur that is right for you!

Finally, tomorrow, we are honored to be hosting Gedolei Yisrael from Eretz Yisrael at 1:45 pm. They are here as part of Keren Olam HaTorah. I hope to see you there!

There are moments in Jewish history that are dramatic and unforgettable. The splitting of the Yam Suf, Har Sinai wrapped in thunder and fire. The dedication of the Mishkan, when the princes of the tribes brought their magnificent offerings before the entire nation.

And then there are quieter moments. Moments that do not shake mountains or split seas, but sustain the Jewish people, day after day, year after year, generation after generation.

Parshas Behaaloscha begins with one of those quieter moments: בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת "When you raise up the lamps" describing the daily service of lighting the menorah, to ensure it was always lit.

Rashi comments on this phrase בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת, literally “to raise up the lamps”: שְׁצַרִיךְ לְהַדְלִיק: עַד שֶׁתֵּהָא שְׁלֵהֶבֶת עוֹלָה מֵאֵלֶיהָ. Aharon was commanded to kindle the flame until it rose on its own.

That phrase עַד שֶׁתֵּהָא שְׁלֵהֶבֶת עוֹלָה מֵאֵלֶיהָ is beautiful and profound.

But Why does the Torah describe lighting lamps as *raising* them? A flame either burns or it does not. What does it mean for a flame to rise on its own?

And the question becomes even stronger when we consider the context of Parshas Hamenorah, placed after the Parsha of the Nesiim and their contributions.

רש"י במדבר ח:ב למה נסמכה פרשת המנורה לפרשת הנשיאים, לפי שכשראה אהרן חנוכת הנשיאים חלשה דעתו, שלא היה עמהם בחנוכה, לא הוא ולא שבטו, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא חייך, שלך גדולה משלהם, שאתה מדליק ומטיב את הנרות:

Rashi brings from Chazal that Aharon felt distressed after the dedication of the Mishkan. The princes of all the other tribes each participated in the *Chanukas HaMizbeach* with public offerings and national celebration. Aharon and Shevet Levi had no such role. And, seeing this, Aharon felt left out. Hashem responded with words that became one of the great consolations in all of Torah: *"Yours is greater than theirs because you clean out, and light the candles."*

The simple understanding of this comment is as follows. The offerings of the *Nesi'im* were magnificent, but they happened just once. They were a glorious moment. The Menorah, by contrast, had to burn תמיד. Every single day. Morning and evening. Again and again, for as long as the Mishkan stood.

This becomes clear when the Torah records something that Rashi finds worthy of special comment. After recording this commandment, the Torah says simply: וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן אֶהְרֵן "And Aharon did so."

Why does the Torah need to tell us this? Rashi explains: "From here we learn that Aharon did not deviate." This is a remarkable statement. Rashi is not merely praising Aharon for fulfilling the *mitzvah*. He is praising him for something far more demanding: Aharon himself never changed. He never let routine dull his care. He never allowed familiarity to breed carelessness. After years of daily service, he brought the same precision, the same intention, the same love to the thousandth lighting as to the very first.

That is what תמיד truly means. Not merely showing up. But showing up fully--every single time, without deviation, without diminution.

The offerings of the *Nesi'im* were magnificent and inspiring. They captured a moment of national celebration. In contrast, Aharon sustained light. Quietly and consistently...no fanfare. And he did it without ever changing. With a deep sense of mission and purpose. To fulfill the original mandate of the *menorah*; to provide a תמיד.

שמות פרק כז פסוק כ: וְאֵתָהּ תִצְנֶנָּהוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלָיָהּ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת גֵּר כְּתִיב לְמַאֲוֵר לְהַעֲלֹת גֵּר תְּמִיד:

That word תמיד is one of the great words in Judaism. The Jewish people have had dramatic moments in our history. Sinai. Miracles. Revelation. But no people can survive on miracles alone. What preserves a people is the steady flame. The home where Torah is lived every day. The parent who builds not merely Jewish experiences but a Jewish atmosphere. The person who quietly says "yes" whenever the community needs help, week after week, year after year, without fanfare.

The *menorah* teaches us that the greatest *avodah* is not the one that dazzles, it is the one that never goes out. Lehavdil, Baltimore sports fans admire Cal Ripken's legendary streak of 2,632 consecutive games. But Cal Ripken played for 16 years. Aharon lit the Menorah for 40. And the light still shines bright.

But the **Ramban** adds another dimension when he asks the same question as Rashi and gives the same answer, but then adds a follow up question:

לָמָּה נִסְמְכָה פְּרֻשֶׁת מְנוֹרָה לְחֻנְכַּת הַנְּשִׂיאִים? לָפִי שֶׁכִּשְׂרָאָה אֶהְרֹן חֲנַכַּת הַנְּשִׂיאִים, הִלְשֵׁה דַעְתּוֹ שֶׁלֹּא הִיָּה עִמָּהֶם בְּחֻנְכָּה, לֹא הוּא וְלֹא שְׁבִטּוֹ; אָמַר לוֹ הַקַּב"ה: הֲיִידָהּ, שֶׁלֶּדָּה גְדוּלָּה מְשֻׁלָּהֶם, שֶׁאֲתָהּ מְדַלִּיק וּמְטִיב אֶת הַנְּרוֹת בְּקָר וְעָרֵב, לְשׁוֹן רַש"י (רש"י על במדבר ח:ב') מְמַדְרֵשׁ אֲגָדָה. וְלֹא נִתְבָּרַר לִי לָמָּה נִחְמוּ בְּהַדְלָקַת הַנְּרוֹת וְלֹא נִחְמוּ בְּקִטְרֵת בְּקָר וְעָרֵב,
“*Why does the section dealing with the candelabrum follow [the section which tells of] the dedication-offerings of the princes? The reason is that when Aaron saw the dedication-offerings of the princes, he became disheartened because neither he nor his tribe participated with them in the dedication; whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: ‘By thy life! Thy contribution is [of] greater [significance] than theirs, for thou wilt kindle and trim the lamps every morning and evening.’*” This is Rashi’s language, from a Midrash Agadah. **But it is not clear to me why G-d consoled Aaron [by reminding him of his function] in lighting the lamps, rather than consoling him with the burning of the incense every morning and evening?**

Perhaps we can suggest an additional layer. Aharon was not merely being told that he had a daily avodah while the Nesi'im participated in a one-time event. The deeper consolation was that the Nesi'im helped dedicate a structure, while Aharon was entrusted with nurturing a light.

Buildings, however holy, can be destroyed. Altars can be dismantled. Offerings can cease. But a flame can be passed from one person to another, from one generation to the next. The greatness of the Menorah was not that it illuminated the Mishkan. Its greatness was that it symbolized a light that would ultimately outlive the Mishkan itself.

The Nesi'im participated in the inauguration of a sacred moment. Aharon became the guardian of a sacred continuity. The Mishkan would one day disappear. The Beis HaMikdash would one day be destroyed. But the light of Torah, symbolized by the Menorah, would continue to burn in Jewish homes, batei midrash, and Jewish hearts throughout history.

Indeed the Ramban quotes a **Medrash** that explicitly says Hashem specifically picked the *avodah* of lighting the *menorah*, referring to the lights of the Chanuka candles lit by the Maccabees, and still lit in Jewish homes today.

וְרֵאִיתִי עוֹד בִּילְמַדְנֵנוּ (תַּנְחוּמָא בַּהֶלְתַּךְ הֵ), וְכֵן בְּבִמְדַבֵּר רַבֵּה (טו ו): אָמַר לוֹ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמִשָּׁה: לָךְ אָמֹר לְאַהֲרֹן, אַל תִּתְנַרְא, לְגְדוּלָּה מְזֹאֶת אֶתָּה מוֹכֵן, הַקְּרִבְנוֹת כָּל זְמַן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קַיָּם הֵן נוֹהֲגִין, אֲבָל הַנְּרוֹת לְעוֹלָם אֵל מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה יֵאָרוּ - וְכָל הַבְּרָכוֹת שֶׁנִּתְּתִי לָךְ לְבָרַךְ אֶת בְּנֵי אֵינֶן בְּטָלִין לְעוֹלָם. וְהִנֵּה דָבָר יְדוּעַ שֶׁכִּשְׂאִין בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קַיָּם וְהַקְּרִבְנוֹת בְּטָלִין מִפְּנֵי הַקְּרִבְנוֹת אֵף הַנְּרוֹת בְּטָלוֹת, אֲבָל לֹא רָמְזוּ אֵלָּא לְנְרוֹת חֲנַכַּת הַשְּׁמוֹנָאִי, שֶׁהִיא נוֹהֲגַת אֵף לְאַחַר הַחֲרָבָן בְּגְלוֹתֵנוּ.

"I have further seen in Yelammedenu (Tanchuma, Behaaloscha 5), and likewise in Bamidbar Rabbah (15:6): The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said to Moshe: 'Go and tell Aharon — do not be afraid. You are destined for something greater than this. The sacrifices are practiced only as long as the Beis HaMikdash stands. But the lights — forever shall they shine el mul penei ha-menorah. And all the blessings that I have given you to bless My children will never be nullified.' Now it is well known that when the Beis HaMikdash no longer stands and the sacrifices are discontinued because of its destruction, the lights of the Menorah also cease. Rather, what the Midrash was hinting at was none other than the lights of the Hasmonean Chanukah — which is practiced even after the destruction, throughout our exile."

And perhaps that is why this inner flame proved indestructible, it was עוֹלָה מְאִלִּיָּה. Centuries later, when the Greeks sought to destroy the Jewish people, they did not merely attack our bodies or our land. They specifically defiled the Beis Hamikdash, including the oil of the Menorah. The Greek-Jewish conflict was not merely a military struggle. Rather, it was fundamentally a clash

between two visions of what makes human beings great. The Greeks believed that external achievement, physical beauty, and intellectual accomplishment were the highest values. In contrast, Torah teaches that the deepest greatness is *pnimi* — inner. A soul burning faithfully with Torah, *mitzvos*, and commitment to God. The light of the Menorah symbolized the wisdom of Torah, studied and practiced day in and day out.

Rav Hutner discusses this *Pachad Yitzchak*, Maamar 10:

פחד יצחק חנוכה מאמר י אות ט:הלא נס המנורה שייך לפורקן יון, מפני שגלות יון היא גלותה של חכמת התורה. ופורקן יון הוא פורקנה של חכמת התורה. וענין המנורה בכלל הוא פעולת ריבוי חכמה בישראל. הרוצה שיחכים ידרים וסימנך מנורה בדרום. ומפני כך, נס המנורה מיוחד הוא לפורקן יון, כנודע. ואם הדלקת המנורה בכלל היא בסוד ריבוי חכמה בכלל; הגה כשהמנורה דולקת בדרך "אור מאיר לעולם" ולא בדרך "נר מאיר לשעה", הרי זה ריבוי כוח ההרשמה הגנוזה בחכמת התורה.

Rav Hutner explains that the Greeks attacked specifically because Torah wisdom is a permanent light, not a temporary candle. The Menorah, which stood on the south side of the Mishkan, represents the multiplication of wisdom within Israel. And the miracle of Chanukah was that the Menorah burned not as a *ner me'ir lasha'ah* — a candle that gives light for a moment and goes out — but as an *ohr me'ir la'olam* — an enduring light that illuminates the world forever. That is the power of Torah: not to inspire temporarily, but to leave a permanent impression on the soul.

The Greeks understood that to defeat the Jewish people they had to extinguish that inner flame. And the miracle of Chanukah was not only that the Jews won militarily. It was also the demonstration that the inner light, the *ner tamid* of the Jewish soul, cannot be permanently extinguished. The flame that Aharon lit in the wilderness is the same flame that burned for 8 days in the Beis HaMikdash. And it is the same flame that burns today, the *שלהבת עולה מאיליה*.

The prophet Zechariah saw a vision of the Menorah burning miraculously, and an angel delivered this message: "Not by might, not by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts."

The Menorah endures not through force, but through spirit. Not through power, but through faithfulness. Not through dramatic gestures, but through the steady, undeviating flame that Aharon modeled for all time.

The Nesi'im created an event. Aharon created a light.

Events inspire. Light endures.

Events belong to a moment. Light passes from generation to generation.

A story is told about **Rav Yisrael Salanter**. Late one night, he passed a shoemaker working by the light of a nearly extinguished candle. Rav Yisrael asked him why he was still working so late into the night. The shoemaker answered simply: "*As long as the candle is still burning, it is possible to repair.*" Rav Yisrael was deeply moved by those words and repeated them often afterward as a teaching about the human soul. As long as the Jewish flame continues to burn, there remains hope, growth, renewal, and redemption. That flame was lit by Aharon in the wilderness. It burned in the Beis HaMikdash. It burned in the homes of the Chashmonaim. And it continues to burn in every Jewish home, every beis midrash, and every Jewish heart today. May we see it return to the Beis Hamikdash, bimhera viyamenu.